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The service organization for professional opera.

777 14TH STREET, NW SUITE 520 WASHINGTON, DC 20005 3287 202/347/9262 FAX 202/393/0735 E-MAIL 72420.2256

July 25, 1994

Dear Senator:

OPERA America, on behalf of this country's 100 professional opera companies, urges you to support Senator James Jeffords' amendment to restore the 5% reduction in NEA funding and to vote against any weakening amendments to the NEA appropriations in the FY 95 Interior Appropriations bill.

The punitive 5% cut will greatly jeopardize the NEA's ability to invest in our nation's communities. Please note that the NEA's budget has been flat for over ten years, and, in fact, the agency has lost 46% in purchasing power in current dollars since FY 91 alone. Moreover, Congress cut funding for the agency by \$4 million only last year. Further cuts will be devastating.


We also are gravely concerned about the three weakening amendments that are expected to be introduced: content restrictions; further cuts or changes in the distribution formula of NEA funds to the states; and procedural changes concerning the grantmaking process.

We strongly urge you to oppose content restrictions, which have been addressed by the Senate over the past few years. We strongly urge you to oppose increased cuts or changes in the distribution of funding which would further weaken the NEA's national role of promoting the arts. In addition, we ask that you oppose any changes to NEA procedures and processes; these issues are not germane to an appropriations bill and are more appropriately left for the upcoming reauthorization of the NEA, at which time such concerns would have a proper forum for regress.

Opera companies and all nonprofit arts institutions play a critical role in building America's communities. Your support of the NEA will allow nonprofit arts institutions to continue to invest in our country's future through excellent artistic programming, extensive educational and social outreach activities, and the generation of revenue and jobs.

Please actively support Senators Jeffords in his attempt to restore the damaging arbitrary cuts to the NEA and to speak and vote against the weakening amendments on the floor.

Sincerely,


Marc A. Scorcia
Chief Executive Officer


Laura J. Young
Public Affairs Director

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